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ABSTRACT

This guide was developed for parents of young children to help them develop their child's readiness to learn to read and to help them teach beginning reading skills to their child. Background information on the reading process and a quiz entitled, "are you preparing your child to read?" are presented. Activities are suggested for reading to children, encouraging early reading experiences, reading by sight, reading by sound, teaching letter sounds, reading rhyming words, and reading with picture clues. (MKM)

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Teaching Your Child To Read

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CONTENTS

Page

1 What Are Good Readers Made Of?
2 Are You Preparing Your Child to Read? A Quiz.
5 When Reading To Your Child...
6 Encourage These Early "Reading" Experiences
8 Reading by Sight
16 Reading by Sound
25 Teaching Letter Sounds
28 Reading Rhyming Words
30 Reading With Picture Clues
32 Reading Is...

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what are good readers made of?

Learning to read requires a combination of many skills. Therefore, the child who arrives at school that first day with these skills in place has a much better chance of learning to read successfully than the child who does not.

Those who study the way a child develops and learns are becoming increasingly convinced that a child's success in learning to read is affected more by the reading-related experiences a child has before entering school, than the reading-related experiences a child has after he enters school.

The old "hands off" philosophy of a decade ago has been laid to rest. Parents can make a difference – a very great difference!

What, then, are good readers made of? And what can you as a parent do to help your child develop the kind of skills that will make reading an easier-to-master, pleasurable experience?

Take the quiz beginning on the following page. It will alert you to the kind of skills reading requires and the kind of experiences you can be providing in everyday ways to develop these skills.

APR 2 3 1980

are you preparing your child to read?

take this quiz and see. . .

Yes No

☐ ☐ **Are you reading to your child?**

Studies show that children who are read to regularly are the better readers. Children develop a long list of benefits from this simple-to-provide experience. If you follow the techniques suggested on page 5, your child can learn that printed lines are to be read from left to right and top to bottom; that stories have a beginning, a middle and an end; and that words can be combined in lots of different ways to tell a story — to describe, to convey feelings, to make one laugh or cry. But perhaps most important: your child will learn that reading is pleasurable and considered important in your household.

☐ ☐ **Are you making your child aware of the many ways printed words are used, other than in books?**

Let your child know that printed words are used to communicate lots of kinds of information. From time to time, read road signs, recipes you're using, captions in comic strips, directions on packaged foods, signs in supermarkets, labels on food containers, instruction tags on clothing, descriptions of toys in catalogs, ads in the newspapers or yellow pages.

☐ ☐ **Are you teaching your child to love and respect books — and appreciate the people who write them?**

There's no better way than letting your child author his own book. This can be as simple as a two-to-five sentence story about his visit to Grandma's. His own book bound with pretty yarn that everyone in the family can fuss over lets him know first-hand that authors are something special and the printed word is a thing to admire. *(See pages 10 and 17 for story writing activity.)*

☐ ☐ **Do *you* read?**

Seeing parents read is another way you show your child that reading is valued in your house.

Yes No

☐ ☐ **Are you helping your child build a growing vocabulary?**

Language is first built through talking. Parents who talk with their child, listen to their child and read to their child are encouraging language development. Parents who do not talk to their child and do not listen to their child are stifling language development.

When your child reads, the words must have meaning. For example, how meaningful is "The boys were patinage in the street."? ("Patinage" is French for "skating.") A limited vocabulary limits a child's success in understanding and interpreting what he reads.

The simple act of naming things you see around you — at home, in books, in stores — helps your child build a vocabulary of new words. And conversation is the best means of helping your child develop an understanding of abstract words like "but," "which," "for," "perhaps."

☐ ☐ **Are you training your child to observe things closely; to see how things are alike and different and to notice details?**

These are the things that help a child see the likenesses and differences between i and l, Q and O, M and N: *she* and *he, meet* and *greet; dog* and *dogs; She went to town, He met a clown.*

So point out the differences that are all around you. Take trees, for example. There's more to a summer tree than a mass of green leaves and a brown trunk. Look closely. There's a difference in the overall shape of trees and in the shape, color and texture of their leaves.

☐ ☐ **Are you helping your child become a careful listener? To hear differences in sounds?**

The child who practices listening and naming the sounds he hears will find the transition to distinguishing letter sounds easier to make. For example, identifying sounds around him, like a refrigerator purring or an air conditioner humming, and hearing the difference between cap and cat, house and horse, is a training step. For good readers must be able to hear the sounds different letters make, like the "ma" sound of M; the "na" sound of N, as well as the differences in beginning and ending sounds: dog, log, lot; climb, chime.

☐ ☐ **Are you providing opportunities for your child to improve his ability to remember what he sees and hears?**

Remembering what you see or hear is not a talent one is born with. It can be improved with practice. Visual memory is what helps a child remember that HAT is spelled H-A-T. Auditory memory helps one remember what a letter sounds like.

Show your child three objects, then cover them. Can she remember them?

Make a pattern of 3 to 4 objects: red checker, red checker, black checker, [illegible]k. Can your child study it a minute and then make the same pattern from memory?

Giving three short directions at a time: "Jump up, clap your hands, sit down." — can your child perform them from memory without your repeating?

☐ ☐ **Can your child name and recognize letters?**

This need not precede early sight reading. Very young children learn to recognize words like "Stop" and "Coca-Cola" by their total shape. **Eventually, however, the act of reading and use of the dictionary will require the learning of letter names.**

More YESes than NOes? Good! Keep up the good work. Building the proper foundation for reading should be your first priority.

If your child has not reached a certain level in the skills referred to in the preceding quiz, you need to concentrate here first. Otherwise, it's rather like teaching a child to multiply before he can add.

When you feel your child is ready to begin reading, provide some of the activities suggested in this leaflet. These learning-to-read activities, by the way, are presented in the order they should be introduced, for we start with easier-to-do and build toward the more-difficult-to-do.

But above all, do not push or pressure. If you push your child too hard and it becomes frustrating to both of you, you may turn your child "off" to reading rather than turn him "on."

So when you both are in the mood, play one of the learning games suggested here. Keep it light, fun and relaxed, for reading is a thing to enjoy . . . .

when reading to your child

Studies show that children who are read to are better readers. Do establish the habit of reading to your child regularly. Follow these techniques. They will make reading time a more profitable experience for your child.

As you read . . .

- **MOVE YOUR HAND UNDER THE LINE OF PRINT.** This will accustom your child to the fact that written lines go from left to right. It may also help her learn to sight-read some of the words she sees in print often. Always let her read any words she knows.

- **WELCOME INTERRUPTIONS.** If something in the story reminds her of something, let her tell you about it.

- **GIVE HER OPPORTUNITIES TO PREDICT WHAT'S TO COME.** Read the title and say, "What do you think this story is about?" Stop on occasion and ask, "What do you think will happen next?"

- **HELP IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S "COMPREHENSION"** (understanding what she reads) **AND MEMORY** (remembering the story and the sequence of story events). These are important reading skills.

  When you finish reading a story, ask your child to retell the story. Ask, "What was the story about? What happened first? What happened after that?"

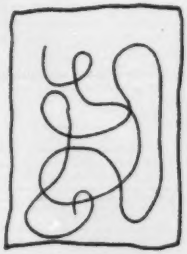
  Re-reading the same story (or poem) until your child can recite it word for word by memory is a good memory-builder, too.

- **ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION** — that, after all, is what good story writers are made of. When you re-read a story, encourage your child to change it. Stop at some appropriate point and say: "How would you make the story different?" "What other way could the story end?"

encourage these early "READING" experiences

Reading should be an enjoyable, pleasurable experience. Building this kind of attitude toward reading starts early.

SCRIBBLE STORIES



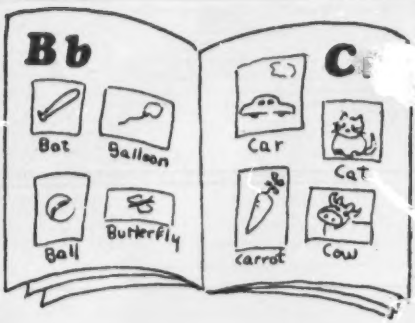
Ever see your child scribble a page of what appears to be absolute nonsense? To your imaginative child it makes perfect sense. So supply your child with pencils and paper, encourage scribbling, and when the page is filled, ask: "Tell me about what you've written." Show an intense interest as he "reads" you his story.

PICTURE READING

Leaf through pages in a child's story book and encourage your child to "read" the pictures. Ask: "What are they doing?" "Where do you think the boy is going?"

Who knows --- your child's story may be more interesting than the printed one.

PICTURE DICTIONARY



Either buy a commercial one or make your own. These books picture an item, with its name printed in large letters beneath it. You can design it with one item per page, or several items per page.

Read it through with your child a few times. Your child will then be able to "read" it on her own (using the pictures as clues).

A good source for picture cut-outs are old story books or color books.

AN ORIGINAL SHORT, SHORT STORY

Print in large letters your child's exact words as she dictates a story about some happening. Simply ask: "Tell me about our trip to the grocery store." Write it down as she says it. (Print it as in a real book: capitals to begin sentences and proper names, the rest in lower case.) The story need not be more than five or six sentences long.

Then have her snuggle close by as you read her story to her. Then re-read it together, with her reading aloud with you. Then, can she read her story all by herself? Have her read it to Daddy or Grandma, or a brother or sister.

She might even like to design a book cover around your printed title:

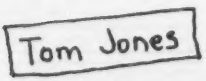
A TRIP TO THE GROCERY STORE
by Sue Gerard

(If she can copy letters and write her own name, let her do this part, too.)

SIGHT reading

In the following activities, you are, in effect, beginning to build a list of words your child will be able to read by sight. You may want to write the words he's beginning to recognize on cards to build up a card set of words he can read.

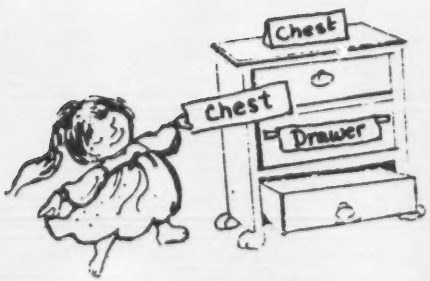
1. **The place to start: YOUR CHILD'S NAME**



If your child cannot recognize his name when he sees it, write it in big letters as he watches. Post it in several obvious places around the house for him to "read."

2. **LABEL THINGS AROUND THE HOUSE.** Start with items in your child's room: bed, chair, chest, mirror, etc.

- Make a second set of label cards. Can your child match these cards to the cards labeling his furniture and tell you what the word is?
- On occasion, hold up one of the second set of cards. Can your child read it?
- When your child can recognize some of the words, take down the label cards on the furniture. Can your child put them back in the right spot and read you the word on the card?
- When your child can recognize these words, label items in another room. Try to include some he already knows, for example --- chair, mirror --- so he can meet with immediate success.



3. SIGN READING

Read billboards, filling station and store display signs to your child. He'll soon be able to read them.

Clip advertisements he's familiar with from old yellow pages, magazines and newspapers. Mount on cards. Flip through them one by one. Can your child recognize "Texaco," "Pepsi," "Shell," etc.?

4. PICTURE DICTIONARY

The picture dictionary mentioned in the previous section will help your child to sight-read words.

5. ACTION WORD BOOKLET

Run, jump, sit, ride, stand are just some of the action words you can teach your child. Show a picture of a child running, with the word "run" beneath. Also have your child run. (With each word, have your child perform or pantomime the action used.)

Then tape the action-word pages on a wall (low where your child can see them) or make an action word booklet for your child to see.

When you feel your child has read the book often enough to be familiar with the words, cover the picture. Can he read the words? Can he do what the card says?

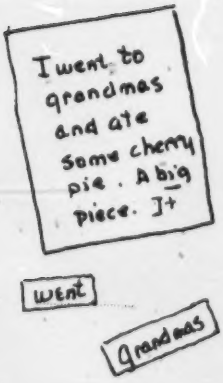
SIGHT reading

words and phrases

After your child has had a lot of experience in reading single words, you may wish to introduce the reading of phrases and whole sentences.

In most of the following activities, the same phrase is repeated over and over and a picture clues the child to the new word. There are many good commercial books like this, or you might like to make your own.

1. CHILD'S DICTATED STORY



Writing down your child's exact words as she tells you (in 5, 6 or 7 sentences) about an experience or make-believe happening has been discussed earlier.

Take it a step further. When your child has read the story enough times to recognize several words, write about 4 or 5 words in her story on separate cards. Let your child select which 4 or 5 words she would like to learn. Can she match these word cards to the words in her story?

Put the word cards in a box. Each day re-read the story and have her match the words. Some later day, shuffle the cards. Hold them up one by one. Can she recognize any of the words?

went to Grandmas

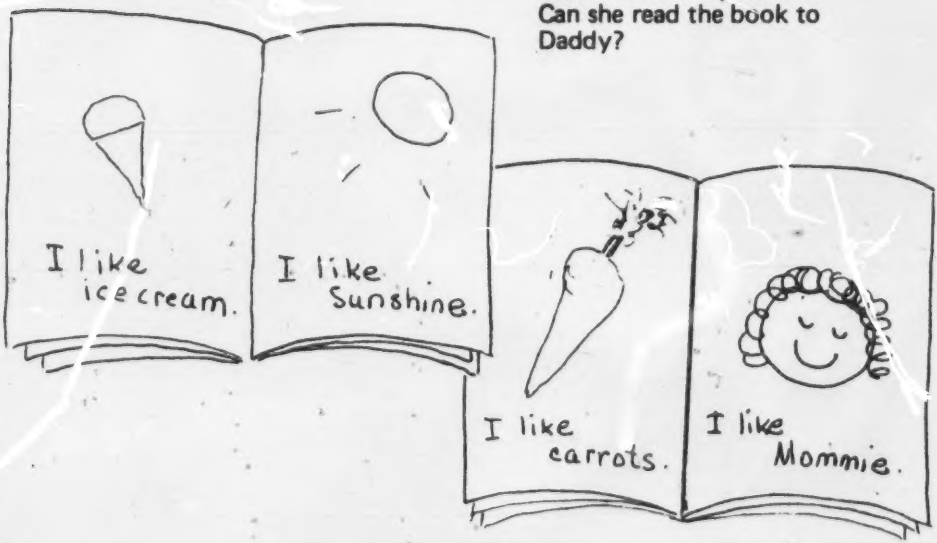
ate some cherry pie

Sometimes write out phrases from the story on cards rather than individual words. For example, "went to Grandma's," "ate cherry pie." Can she match these phrases to the same phrases in the story?

2. "I LIKE" BOOKLET

This is similar to the picture dictionary, but each page has a picture or simple drawing of things your child likes, with "I like . . . ." written beneath each picture: "I like carrots." "I like dogs." "I like candy." "I like sunshine." "I like ice cream."

Read the "I Like" book to your child; she'll soon be able to read it by herself. Can she read the book to Daddy?



3. RHYTHM BOOK

You can either buy or make a "rhythm" book. It's a book with a simple story that repeats the same phrase over and over. And the repetition of the words give it a certain rhythm.

Underline or use a different-colored crayon for the new word on each page. Paste a picture showing the new word: a cat, horse, clown or whatever.

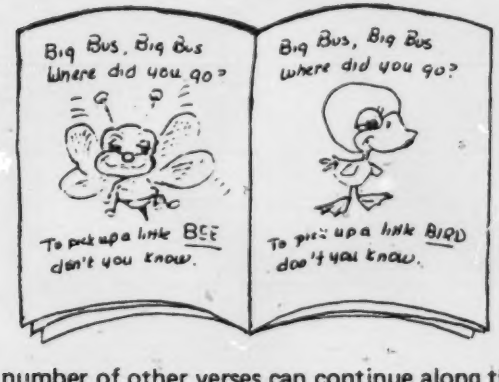
For example, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear" is a commercial book you may buy:

"Brown Bear, Brown Bear, what do you see?"
"I see a **cat** looking at me." *(This page has a picture of a cat.)*

"Brown Bear, Brown Bear, what do you see?"
"I see a **horse** looking at me." *(This page pictures a horse.)*

Or you may make up your own rhythm phrase, for example about a BIG BUS . . .

*Big bus, big bus, where did you go?
To pick up a **little boy**, don't you know, etc.


Big Bus, Big Bus
Where did you go?
To pick up a little BEE
don't you know.
Big Bus, Big Bus
where did you go?
To pick up a little BIRD
don't you know.

*Any number of other verses can continue along the same line . . .

a little girl
a barking dog
a little bee
a chirping bird

oo choo train
d into town

A big **bear**
got off with a
funny looking clown.

A choo choo train
pulled into town

A big **elephant**
got off with a
funny looking clown.

A choo choo train
pulled into town

A big **lion**
got off with a
funny looking clown.

A choo choo train
pulled into town

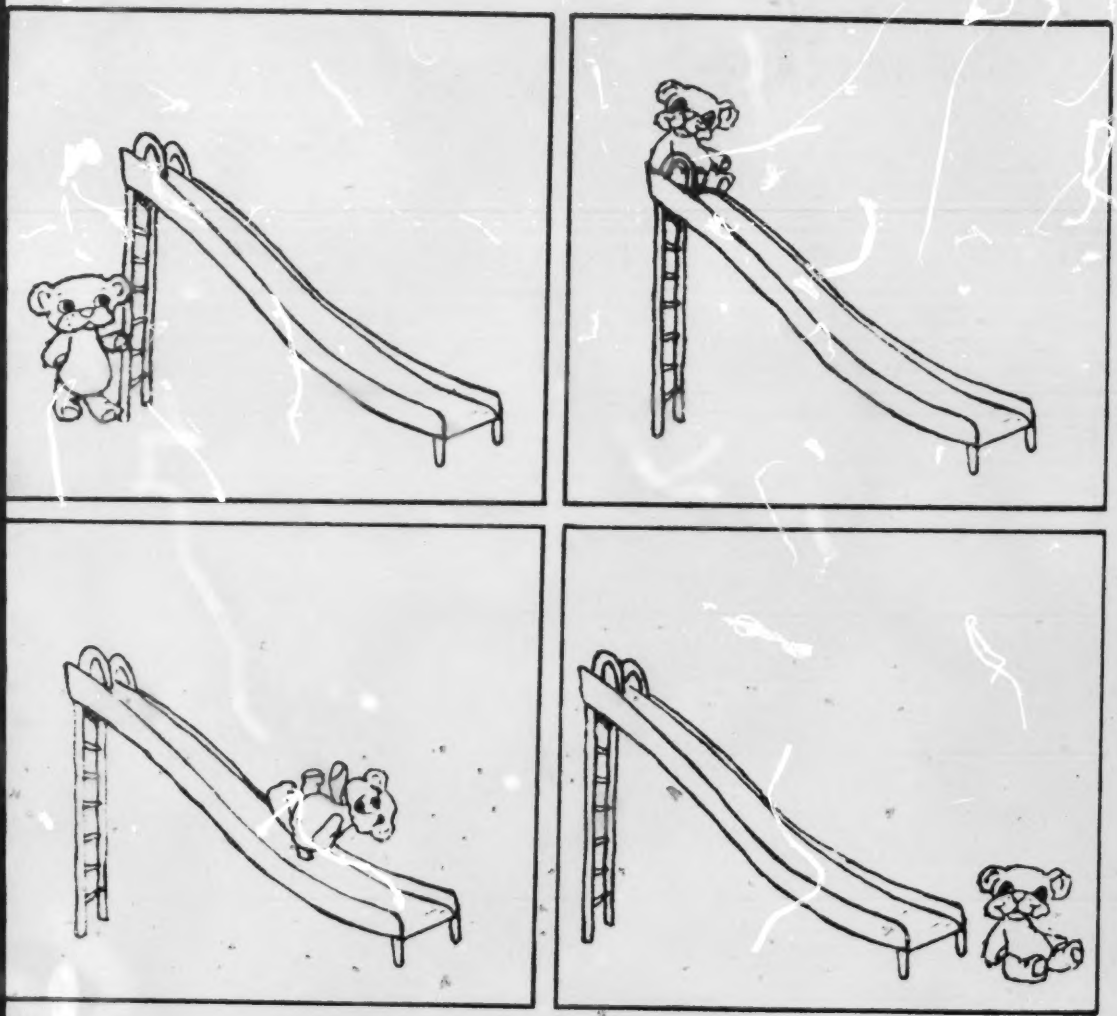
A big **duck**
got off with a
funny looking clown.

sequencing stories

CARTOON CUT–OUTS

Cut up a strip from the comics or pictures from old story books. Can your child place them in proper sequence, left to right? (The action in the pictures must obviously show a sequence of events or be a familiar story, like "The Three Bears" or "The Three Little Kittens.")

Use only about four pictures at first, increasing the number gradually to six or seven.



reading by SOUND

Teaching your child to read by sound is a more involved approach and one you need not try if you do not feel comfortable with it.

The basic approach is to start with the beginning sound of words. And since some letter sounds are easier to distinguish than others, we recommend you teach them in the following order:

EASIER TO HEAR SOUNDS:

F D M G
B S T W

MORE DIFFICULT SOUNDS:

N P K C J
H L R

MOST DIFFICULT SOUNDS:

We suggest you do not concern yourself with these:

A E I O U
Q V X Z

Your child will need to hear words that begin with the "F" sound, for example, lots of times before he can distinguish it. So don't rush it. Don't push it. Make it fun, relaxed and game-like.

19

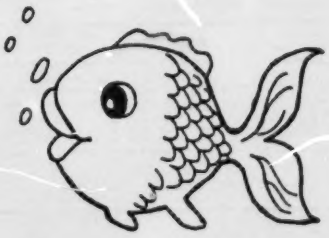
SET OF SOUND CARDS

You may mount these squares on cards to make a set of sound cards. For the sound or sounds your child is working on, post cards on the wall or refrigerator door.

Name the letter and say the word emphasizing the beginning sound, associating the sound with the picture: "f-ish". Do "father" and "fish" start alike? Do "out" and "fish" start alike?

Introduce only one sound at a time. When you feel your child is ready, introduce another letter sound or two. Eventually, all your cards will be on display.

Ff



Dd

Mm

cut here

20

BLANK PAGE
DO NOT FILM

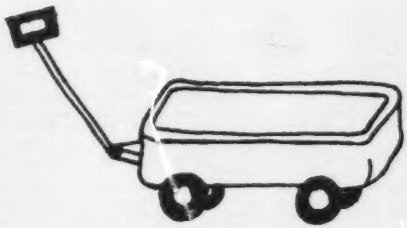
Gg

Bb

Ss

Tt

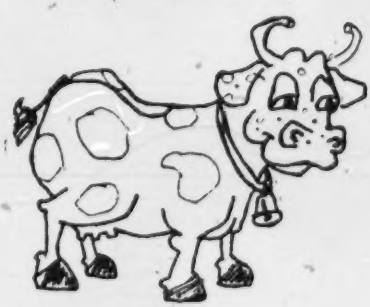
W w



N n

P p

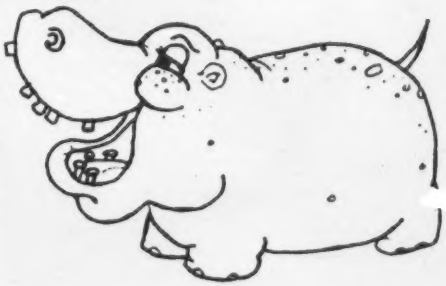
K k–C c



cut here

Jj

Hh



Ll

Rr

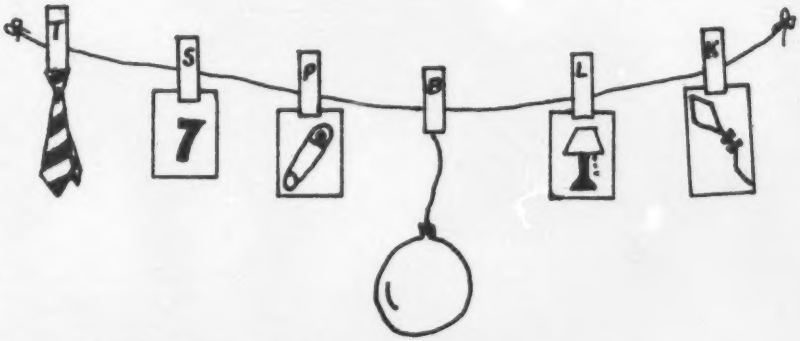
R

23

teaching letter sounds

letter sound games

The games are presented in the order they should be introduced.



1. LETTER LINE–UP

First, help your child get the idea that each letter makes its own sound. Hang up a clothesline. Mark some wooden snap clothespins with the initials of your child's full name (first, middle and last) and the first names of other members of the family. The illustration above might represent:

Child's name:	Terry Steven Peterson
Mother and Dad:	Barbara and Larry
Sister:	Kate

Then attach an actual object or a picture of something that starts with the same sound.

When you feel your child has the idea, you can attach items to represent other letters in the alphabet. Work on only a few at a time, following the order recommended on page 16.

2. TEACHING THE BEGINNING SOUNDS

The following six activities, illustrated here for the "B" sound, can be used for any of the letter sounds in the alphabet. The idea is this: concentrate on helping your child hear lots of words that begin with the same sound you're working on.

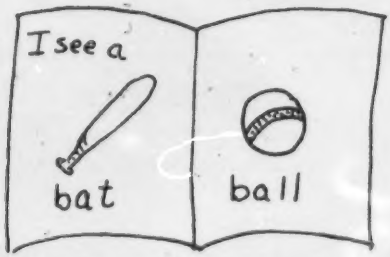
Use a card with B b on it in the first three activities, so your child can associate the letter B b with its sound.

- **Collect "B" items from around the house:** ball, bat, balloon, book, boat, bowl, etc. Name each one. Emphasize the beginning sound, but do not isolate it. Have your child name each item, listening very carefully to the beginning "B" sound.

- **Compare two items: Do they start with the same "B" sound?** From time to time, pick up two items: one with a "B" sound; the other item can sometimes start with B, sometimes not. For example: ball–boat; ball–truck; bowl–cup. Say: "Listen carefully. Do these start with the same sound?" Then you name the items slowly and have your child name the items.

- **Which beginning sound does not sound like the others?** Place 3 items in front of your child: two that start with "B" and one that does not. For example: ball, bowl, car. Ask your child to listen very carefully to the beginning sound. Name each item, then have your child name each item. Ask him which one has a beginning sound that does not sound like the others. (It's often easier for a child to hear the sound that is different than to hear which ones sound alike.)

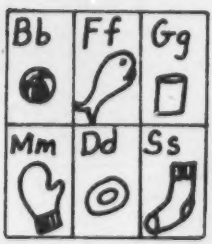
- **Make a "B" booklet.** The cover page can read: "I see a . . . " with each following page picturing a B item. Print the name of the item beneath each picture.



- **Leaf through a story book, coloring book or the toy section of a catalog.** Point to some of the things you see and have your child name them. Do they start with the "B" sound?
- **As you walk around the house or ride in the car, name some of the things you see.** Does the word start with the "B" sound? Does it start like "ball?"

3. SOUND LOTTO

A



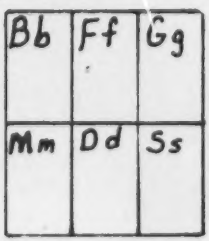
After your child has been working on several beginning sounds, make a lotto card with 6 to 9 letters on it.

Say a word like "b." Have your child use beans or pennies to cover the beginning sound he hears on his game card.

Start with Illustration A: a picture clue accompanying the letter is easier than illustration B without a picture clue.

After some experience, cover the picture clues. Can your child identify the right sound with the right letter?

B



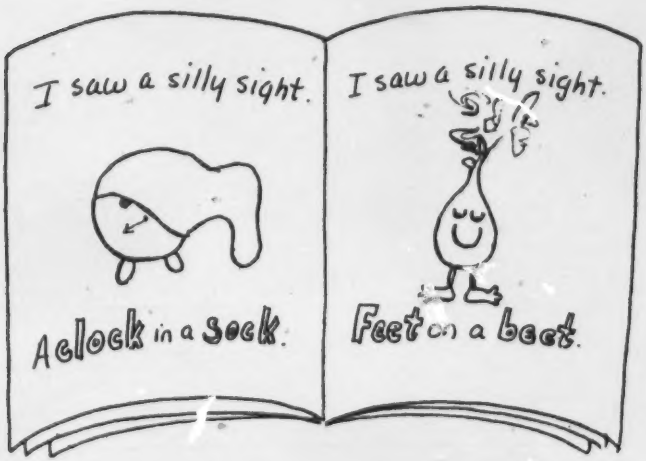
reading rhyming words

. . . combining sound and sight clues

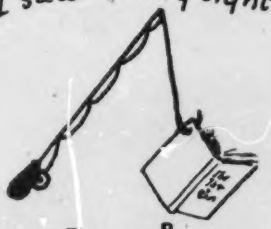
Once your child has had some exposure to beginning sounds, she may be ready to sight-read rhyming words.

You can purchase books along these lines or use simple line drawings to make your own.

You can make an "I Saw A Silly Sight" booklet like this: (Use a contrasting crayon color for the rhyming words.)



I saw a silly sight.



A book on a hook.

I saw a silly sight.

A bone in a cone.

I saw a silly sight.

A dog on a log.

I saw a silly sight.

A cat at bat.

reading with picture clues

. . . combining sight and content clues

In Kindergarten, your child will be introduced to books that give a picture clue along with a simple sentence so your child can choose the pictured word that makes sense.

You can use picture cut-outs (or simple line drawings) to make your own, if you like.

Read the sentence to your child, with your child reading the words she knows. WHICH WORD SHOULD GO IN THE BLANK? WHICH WORD MAKES SENSE? Let her circle the right answer.

I see a _____ in the lake.

boat bat bear

I see a _____ on the table.

fork cat wagon

I see a _____ in a tree.

bird

bat

boat

I see a girl wearing a _____.

sweater

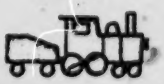
stool

step

I see a _____ on the tracks.

tree

truck



train

reading is . . .

Reading is basically putting one's thoughts in print. This is why we suggest you have your child "author" his own book.

Reading is more than just recognizing isolated words. It involves complex thinking skills. The child must understand and comprehend the combination of words he is reading. That's why we recommend you pause during story reading time to talk about and review what you're reading.

Reading is also more meaningful to the child who has had lots of experiences. For example, a story about a kangaroo will mean more to the child who's been to the zoo because he has seen a real-life one. So anytime you take your child by the hand and take him with you to the store, the zoo, the park, the airport or the children's theater — you are broadening his scope of understanding of things. It's the best form of reading readiness we know. In fact, it's a form of reading readiness you should continue even after your child learns to read. For the more experiences your child has, the more topics he will read about with interest and understanding.

Let us again re-state an important point made earlier: **Preparing your child for reading should have priority over teaching your child the actual act of reading.** And if at any time your child resists the learning-to-read games suggested in this booklet, chances are that he is not ready or senses that you are pushing too hard. If your child fails in his first reading attempts or finds the experience frustrating, he may not want to try again. "Games," after all, should be fun — or you shouldn't play them. **Reading is a thing to enjoy forever.**